

DEPARTMENT OF PRACTICAL ARTS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
31 GREEN STREET -> NEWARK 2, N. J.

WILLIAM M. DEVONALD, DIRECTOR

February 23, 1972

Memorandum to: Dr. Edward I. Pfeffer  
Deputy Superintendent

From: Wesley Danilow  
Coordinator of Vocational Education  
and Special Industrial Arts Courses

Re: Related Information concerning Industrial Arts  
Curriculum Project

On May 4, 1970, in New Jersey Bell's auditorium in Newark, a group of ten 7th and 8th graders from two Junior High Schools in the city, with the help of their four teachers, presented an exciting demonstration and testimonial of their involvement and accomplishments in the new Industrial Arts Curriculum Project which began in those schools in September, 1968. The occasion was the monthly meeting of Newark's Business and Industrial Coordinating Council, attended by 75 business and community representatives. The businessmen were startled and surprised, but highly pleased and intrigued by what they saw. The community people stared in almost disbelief that this demonstrated progress could actually occur in Newark schools, and one representative even challenged the ability of white teachers to impart such enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge into minority youth, until one black 8th grader responded, "Man, don't stir up that stuff. We don't care what color our teacher is just as long as he teaches us what we want to know". The response from the audience was spontaneous applause.

What had been seen was a demonstration of teamwork in which students developed a topographical map by taking segmented measurements of the contour of a sandpile. They would use this map in estimating the cost of earth removal for a foundation planned for the sandpile. They also laid out boundary markers on a simulated plot of ground, thus demonstrating their appreciation of the role of an estimator, surveyor and engineer. They also walked through an assembly line process of making coat hangers, contrasting comparative costs and quality of hand versus an engineered layout. This process was also carried out in the manufacturing of a high intensity lamp. But the most impressive part was the confidence they showed in their capable fielding of questions from the audience.

cont.

This same group of students and teachers presented their story and demonstration to the Western Electric Co. staff at Kearny, N.J., and before the Company's Public Relations Conference at Morristown in June 1970. Again, there was a reaction of overwhelming approval and interest, even amazement and wonderment that "these ghetto kids are getting something I wish my kid could get". The enthusiasm of the students, the dedication of the teachers, the excellent relationships between teacher and student, the ability of these young men to clearly explain not only what they were doing but the underlying purposes of the action, and the teamwork of the group were all readily apparent and recognized. The audiences were further impressed and quickly accepted reports of progress such as:

1. In the Experimental Reading Program utilizing the I.A.C.P. text as the standard reading text the tangible effect was the raising of the cumulative reading grade level during the one-year span, September 1970 through June 1971, from 5.1 to 6.57. Reading scores were established from the Nelson Reading Achievement Test. The test were administered at the beginning and end of the school year.
2. Discipline Improvement - the four I.A.C.P. teachers reported no disciplinary problems in their program during the school year as compared to seven discipline problems in the three remaining I.A. areas, metalworking and mechanical drawing. In other subject areas the disciplinary problems ran at a frequency of 3.5 for the control group to 1 occurrence for the I.A.C.P. group.
3. Student interest in I.A.C.P. (Attendance) in the evaluation of student attendance in the shop & reading class, the I.A.C.P. group attended both classes on the average of 4 days better per student in the area of illegitimate absences and 2 days better per student in the legitimate absence area.  
\* (Cutting classes)

Finally, the interest and encouragement from business has prompted the school administration to plan for the expansion of this Project to all five of Newark's Junior High Schools beginning September 1971, reaching upwards of 2000 boys in the 7th and 8th grades.

It is no wonder, therefore, that businessmen who had evidenced little interest in the problems of Newark's schools, or even those who had never visited an urban school nor talked with teachers and students, are now showing a genuine desire to understand what this Project is all about and how it differs from the traditional Industrial Arts Program. They are even beginning to hope that there must be a means for developing a more realistic educational policy for urban youth.